

Original document

METHOD OF COATING FLUORESCENT SUBSTANCE PARTICLE, FLUORESCENT SUBSTANCE PARTICLE, FLUORESCENT LAMP AND MANUFACTURE

Patent number: JP61023678
 Publication date: 1986-02-01
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 Classification:
 - international: C09K11/02; H01J9/22; H01J61/42
 - european:

Application number: JP19850095682 19850507

Priority number(s): US19840607846 19840507; US19840607865 19840507;
 US19850718095 19850403; US19850718096 19850403

Also published as

EP0160856
 FI851785 (4)
 EP0160856
 BR8502203
 AR242639 (1)
 EP0160856
 FI91458C (1)

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Abstract of corresponding document: **EP0160856**

Disclosed is a method for applying a continuous protective coating to the surface of individual phosphor particles. The method involves chemical vapor deposition of the protective coating on individual particles of a phosphor powder while the phosphor particles are suspended in a fluidized bed. During the method, the fluidized particles are exposed to the vaporized coating precursor material at a first temperature, which is less than the decomposition temperature of the precursor material, and the precursor material is reacted to form the desired coating material at a second temperature, which is greater than or equal to the temperature at which the precursor material reacts to form the coating material. A phosphor particle having a continuous protective coating is also disclosed. A method for improving the lumen maintenance of a fluorescent lamp and a fluorescent lamp (24) having improved maintenance are further disclosed. The method involves applying a non-particulate, conformal aluminum oxide coating to the outer surface of individual particles of a finely-divided fluorescent lamp phosphor, applying the coated phosphor particles to a fluorescent lamp envelope (25), and processing the phosphor coated

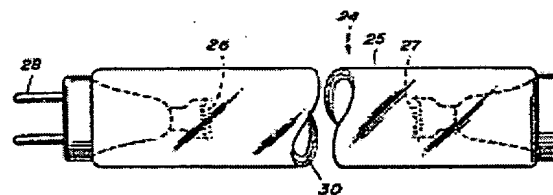


FIG. 2

envelope into a finished lamp.

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Description of corresponding document: **EP0160856**

METHOD FOR COATING PHOSPHOR PARTICLES, PHOSPHOR PARTICLE, FLUORESCENT LAMP, AND MANUFACTURING METHOD

This invention relates to phosphors. More particularly, this invention is concerned with phosphor particles and fluorescent lamps.

Phosphors are used in mercury vapor discharge lamps and viewing screens of various electronic devices. It has been recognized that various improvements in the performance of phosphors can be obtained if the phosphor material is coated with a protective film or pigment.

Numerous attempts have been made to coat the outer surface of individual phosphor particles with a protective coating. However, previous coating methods have failed to produce a particle having a continuous protective coating having a desired substantially uniform thickness on the outer surface of the particle.

The improved performance of phosphor particles having a continuous protective coating can be particularly useful in improving the performance of fluorescent lamps.

According to this invention, there is provided a method for applying a continuous protective coating on individual phosphor particles which comprises depositing a continuous protective coating on individual phosphor particles by gas-phase chemical vapor deposition while said individual phosphor particles are suspended in a fluidized bed. The fluidized particles are exposed to a vaporized precursor material at a first temperature, the first temperature being less than the temperature at which the precursor material decomposes. After the particles have been enveloped by the precursor material, the precursor material reacts to form a continuous protective coating on the surface of the individual particles at a second temperature, the second temperature being greater than or equal to the temperature at which the precursor material reacts to form the protective coating material.

In another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a phosphor particle having a continuous protective coating surrounding the outer surface of the particle.

In accordance with still another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method for improving the lumen maintenance of fluorescent lamps comprising the steps of depositing a continuous aluminum oxide coating on individual particles of a finely-divided fluorescent lamp phosphor powder to form individually and continuously coated phosphor particles, applying one or more layers of phosphor to a fluorescent lamp envelope to form a phosphor coated envelope, at least one of the phosphor layers having a phosphor component comprising individually and continuously coated phosphor particles; and processing the phosphor coated envelope into a finished fluorescent lamp.

In accordance with yet another aspect of the present invention there is provided a fluorescent lamp comprising a glass envelope wherein the inner wall of the glass envelope is coated with one or more layers of phosphor, at least one of the phosphor layers having a phosphor component comprising individually and continuously coated phosphor particles of a finely-divided fluorescent lamp phosphor which have been individually coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating.

In the drawing:

Figure 1 is a schematic representation of an apparatus suitable for use in the method of the present invention.

invention.

Figure 2 is a diagrammatic elevational view of a lamp.

For a better understanding of the present invention, together with other and further objects, advantages and capabilities thereof, reference is made to the following disclosure and appended claims in connection with the above described drawing.

The method of the present invention involves the formation of a continuous protective coating on phosphor particles by gas-phase chemical vapor deposition while the phosphor particles are suspended within a fluidized bed.

The fluidized particles are exposed to the vaporized precursor material at a first temperature, the first temperature being less than the temperature at which the precursor material decomposes. After the particles have been enveloped by the precursor material, the precursor material is reacted to form a continuous protective coating on the surface of the individual particles at a second temperature, the second temperature being greater than or equal to the temperature at which the precursor material reacts to form the protective coating material.

The fluidized bed is formed by passing an inert gas through the phosphor particles in order to suspend the particles in the inert gas stream. Examples of inert gases suitable for use in this method include nitrogen, argon, helium, neon, or mixtures thereof. In addition to supporting the phosphor particles in a fluidized bed, the inert gas functions as a carrier gas. A volatilizable coating precursor material is vaporized in the inert gas before the inert gas enters the reaction chamber in which the phosphor particles become suspended. Preferably the carrier gas is saturated with the vapor of the coating precursor material. As the carrier gas containing the vaporized coating precursor material passes upwardly through the phosphor particles to suspend the particles in a fluidized bed, the particles are enveloped by the vapor of the coating precursor material which is contained in the carrier gas.

In the present method, the fluidized particles are exposed to the vaporized coating precursor material at a first temperature to envelop the particles with coating precursor material, the first temperature being less than the temperature at which the coating precursor material decomposes; and then reacting the coating precursor material enveloping the fluidized particles at a second temperature to form a continuous protective coating of predetermined thickness on the surface of individual phosphor particles, the second temperature being greater than or equal to the temperature at which the coating precursor material reacts to form the protective coating.

The fluidized bed is preferably maintained in a temperature gradient ranging from a lowest temperature to a highest temperature. The lowest temperature should be less than the temperature at which the coating precursor material will decompose, while the highest temperature should be equal to or greater than the temperature at which the coating precursor material reacts to form the desired coating material.

An oxidizing gas, if necessary, is introduced into the fluidized bed separately from the carrier gas containing the vaporized coating precursor material. Examples of suitable oxidizing gases are air or oxygen. The oxidizing gas may be mixed with a diluent inert gas.

The thickness of the coating is dependent upon the amount of time the process is run, the temperature of the evaporation source, the flow rate through the evaporation source, and the surface area of the phosphor particles.

Examples of phosphor coating materials that can be applied by the present method include metal or metal oxides. Preferred coating materials are the refractory oxides, such as aluminum oxide or yttrium oxide. For a chemical compound or chemical composition to be suitable for use as coating precursor material in the method of the present invention, the compound or composition must be volatilizable. Organo and alkoxide compounds of the metal or nonmetal of the desired oxide coating material which are volatilizable under the conditions of the method may be used as coating precursor materials in the present invention.

invention. Acetylacetonates of the metal of the desired oxide coating material can also be used as precursor materials in the present method.

For example, some suitable aluminum oxide precursor materials are represented by the general form $RX(OR')_{3-x}Al$ wherein $0 < x < 3$ and x is an integer, and R and R' are lower alkyl groups, such as: $-C_2H_5$; $-C_3H_7$; or $-C_4H_9$

Examples of suitable yttrium oxide precursor materials are represented by the general formula $R_x(YO_3)_{3-x}$ wherein $0 < x < 3$ and x is an integer, and R and R' are lower alkyl groups, such as $-CR_3$; $-C_2H_5$; $-C_3H_7$; $-C_4H_9$; or $-C_5H_{11}$.

This listing of examples of suitable coating precursor material for aluminum oxide or yttrium oxide coatings is not to be construed as necessarily limiting thereof. Any alkyl, alkoxy, or acetylacetonate compounds of aluminum or yttrium which can be vaporized into the inert carrier gas under the conditions of the method may be used as coating precursor material for aluminum oxide coatings or yttrium oxide coatings, respectively.

When an oxygen-containing coating precursor material, such as an alkoxide or acetylacetonate, is used in the method of the present invention, the use of an oxidizing gas is optional. In order to implement the fluidized bed - chemical vapor deposition coating method of the present invention, the phosphor powder particles must be capable of being fluidized. Phosphor powders having an average particle size range of about 20 to 80 microns and larger can be fluidized with little or no difficulty. Difficulty is encountered, however, in attempting to fluidize fine phosphor powders, i.e., phosphor powders with particles having an average particle size of less than about 20 microns. The difficulty in fluidizing particles of fine phosphor powder arises from interparticle adhesive forces which cause agglomerate bridging between the agglomerates. Such agglomeration and bridging of agglomerates normally results in the formation of channels through the bed thereby causing the gas to pass through the channels without fluidizing the particles. Under these circumstances, there is little or no powder bed expansion.

Particles of fine phosphor powders, such as coolwhite halophosphate phosphors which fall within class C of the Geldart Classification Scale, can be fluidized and coated by the method of the present invention. In order to fluidize particles of a fine phosphor powder in the method of the present invention, a small amount, about 1 weight percent with respect to the phosphor, of a fluidizing aid should be mixed with the phosphor powder to form a uniform mixture. Preferably, an amount of fluidizing aid less than or equal to about 1 weight percent with respect to the phosphor is employed. Suitable fluidizing aids include small particle aluminum oxide, e.g., Aluminum Oxide C, or small particle silica.

Fluidization of fine phosphor powders can alternatively be accomplished by additional agitation of the phosphor powder particles which are suspended in the stream of carrier gas. This additional agitation can be accomplished by various agitating means, such as a mechanical stirrer, and preferably a high speed vibromixer. In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, both the fluidizing aid and the additional agitation are used together in order to fluidize the phosphor powder and improve the expansion of the fluidized bed. A schematic representation of a fluidized bed reactor suitable for use in the method of the present invention is shown in Fig. 1.

In Fig. 1, a feeder line 11 carries the inert carrier gas into a stainless steel bubbler 12 which contains volatilizable coating precursor material, usually in the liquid state. In the bubbler 12, the coating precursor material is vaporized into the carrier gas. The carrier gas containing the precursor can be diluted to provide an appropriate concentration of reactants. The carrier gas containing the vaporized coating precursor material is carried through a connector line 13 into the base of a quartz glass reaction tube 15. The carrier gas containing the coating precursor material passes through a quartz frit 14 within the tube 15 which is used to support the phosphor particle bed 16. Also within the tube 15 is a vibrating mixer 17. Circumferentially located on the shaft of the vibrating mixer 17 and near the vibrating disc 19 is a series of holes 18 through which the oxidizing gas with or without an inert diluent gas enters the reaction tube 15. The quartz glass reaction tube 15 is surrounded by a furnace 20.

In Fig. 1, a feeder line 11 carries the inert carrier gas into a stainless steel bubbler 12 which contains volatilizable coating precursor material, usually in the liquid state. In the bubbler 12, the coating precursor material is vaporized into the carrier gas. The carrier gas containing the precursor can be diluted to provide an appropriate concentration of reactants. The carrier gas containing the vaporized coating precursor material is carried through a connector line 13 into the base of a quartz glass reaction tube 15. The carrier gas containing the coating precursor material passes through a quartz frit 14 within the tube 15 which is used to support the phosphor particle bed 16. Also within the tube 15 is a vibrating mixer 17. Circumferentially located on the shaft of the vibrating mixer 17 and near the vibrating disc 19 is a series of holes 18 through which the oxidizing gas with or without an inert diluent gas enters the reaction tube 15. The quartz glass reaction tube 15 is surrounded by a furnace 20.

The feeder line 11 which carries the inert gas into the bubbler 12 and the bubbler 12 which contains a volatilizable coating precursor material in liquid state are both heated to a temperature which facilitates vaporization of the precursor material into the inert carrier gas. The carrier line 13, which carries the vapor-containing gas stream to the quartz glass reaction tube 15, is heated to a higher temperature than of line 11 and the bubbler 12 to maintain the precursor material in the vapor state as it is carried to the reaction tube 15 from the bubbler 12.

An important feature of the preferred embodiment of the present invention is the maintenance of the fluidized bed in a temperature gradient. The frit area of the reaction tube is heated to and maintained at a temperature which is less than the temperature at which the coating precursor material decomposes. The area of the reaction tube, which is located at the bottom of the fluidized bed, has the lowest temperature. The temperature gradient in which the fluidized bed is maintained.

By introducing the precursor material into the fluidized bed via a stream of inert carrier gas and by maintaining the frit area at a temperature less than the decomposition temperature of the precursor material (which is also less than the highest temperature of the temperature gradient), the outer surface of each phosphor particle in the fluidized bed is enveloped by vapor of the coating precursor material. Introducing the coating precursor material into the reaction tube via an inert carrier gas eliminates the problem of premature reaction of the precursor material to the desired coating material or to an undesired by-product. Premature reaction results in formation of the actual coating material or by-product in the carrier line from the bubbler 12 to the reaction tube 15, below the frit, or in the porous openings of the frit 14 itself. Premature reaction can further result in blockage of the frit and interruption of the coating process. The problem of decomposition of the precursor material in the frit area is further avoided by maintaining the frit area at a temperature below the temperature at which the precursor material thermally decomposes.

Decomposition of the precursor materials which do not contain oxygen, e.g., the alkyl compounds, results in body color being imparted to the coated phosphor and/or incorporation of carbon contaminants in phosphor coating, which contaminants absorb exciting and/or emitting radiation of the phosphor.

In the method of this invention, the oxidizing gas, when necessary, is introduced into the fluidized bed separately from the carrier gas. The oxidizing gas may or may not be diluted with an inert gas. Preferably, the oxidizing gas is introduced into the fluidized bed at a temperature which is less than the highest temperature, but greater than the lowest temperature. Most preferably, the oxidizing gas is introduced into the fluidized bed at a point in the temperature gradient where the temperature is less than the temperature at which the coating precursor material will undergo a chemical change in the presence of an oxidizing gas. This minimizes contamination of the coating material with carbon and other carbon-containing compounds.

The highest temperature of the temperature gradient must be sufficiently high for the coating precursor material surrounding the outer surface of the phosphor particles to react to form the desired coating material.

By reacting the precursor material after the vapor of the precursor material has enveloped the phosphor particle surface, the coating is continuous, i.e., the coating does not consist of individual particles of fine powder but, rather, shows a high degree of conformal coating, replicating submicron features found naturally occurring on the phosphor grain substrates. The coating is noncrystalline.

The following is exemplary of preparations of coated phosphor powder particles according to the method of the preferred embodiments of the present invention and is not to be construed as necessarily limiting thereof.

EXAMPLE I

In this example, particles of cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor powder were coated with aluminum oxide by the method of the present invention, using the apparatus illustrated by Fig. 1. A fluidized bed 1-5/8 inch (4.0 centimeter) I.D. was used for the method. Two hundred grams of calcium

halophosphate phosphor powder (Cool White No. 4459, obtained from the Chemical and Metallurgical Division of GTE Products Corporation, Towanda, Pennsylvania) and 0.1g (0.05 weight percent) Aluminum Oxide C, available from Degussa, Inc., the fluidizing aid, were dry blended in a polyethylene jar to obtain a uniform dispersion of the Aluminum Oxide C fluidizing aid throughout the alkaline earth halophosphate powder. The mixture of the halophosphate phosphor powder and fluidizing aid was added to the quartz glass reaction tube 15 to form the phosphor bed. Liquid trimethyl aluminum was used in the stainless steel bubbler 12 as the precursor material. The carrier gas was bubbled into the trimethyl aluminum liquid to form carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum. The carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was diluted with inert gas and then was transported via carrier line 13 to the quartz glass reaction tube 15. Oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen was transported into the fluidized bed through holes 18 circumferentially located on the shaft of the vibrating mixer 17 above the vibrating disc 19. The vibrating mixer was operated at a speed of 60 cycles/minute. Introducing the oxygen into the fluidized bed through an opening or openings located above the vibrating disc, which disc is sufficiently removed from the frit area to prevent the caking of solid material on the frit, eliminated reaction of the precursor material in the frit opening and prevented blockage of the frit openings.

The nitrogen gas line 11 leading into the bubbler 12 and the bubbler 12 were both heated to and maintained at a temperature of 300°C. Line 13 leading out of the bubbler 12 and into the bottom of the quartz glass reaction tube 15 was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 450°C.

The furnace 20 was a resistance heated 3 zone furnace. The frit area was maintained at a temperature from about 600°C to about 1500°C; the oxidizing gas inlet area, located above the vibrating disc, was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 400°C; and the area above the oxidizing gas inlet area was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 650°C, although any temperature of 450°C or above can be used.

A nitrogen flow of about 100 cc/min was passed into the bubbler 12, and the nitrogen gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum (transporting about 700 mg/hr) passed through line 13 and into the reaction tube 15 at a flow rate of about 450 cc/min. The stream of oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen gas was passed into the reaction tube through a second carrier line 21 at a flow rate of about 450 cc/min. The concentration ratio of oxygen to alkyl was observed to affect the body color of the coated particle formed by the present method. A concentration ratio of O₂ to trimethyl aluminum of about 200 to 1 was maintained during the reaction to obtain a white body color. (A ratio of less than about 200 to 1 can result in poor, or non-white body color.)

The process was continued for 6 hours and an aluminum oxide coating having a thickness of about 100 Å was formed on the phosphor particles.

The aluminum oxide coated particles of the alkaline earth halophosphate were removed from the reaction tube.

Electron microscopy of the coated phosphor particles of this example indicated a smooth conformal coating of aluminum oxide on the cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor particles. The continuous and conformal nature of the coating applied to the phosphor particle in the example is demonstrated by the replication of the submicron features of the phosphor substrate. The submicron features of the coated particle, however, are visibly less pronounced when compared to the submicron features of an uncoated particle. The coating was additionally shown to be noncrystalline by reflection electron diffraction techniques.

Auger analysis of the coated particle surface revealed that complete surface coverage, within the limits of analysis (99.8%), by aluminum oxide has been achieved, based on the attenuation of the calcium peak height of the alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor using the formula:

EMI12.1

<SEP> F <SEP> | <SEP> I Ca <SEP> coated <SEP> i <SEP> 1 <SEP> x <SEP> I Q O
 <tb> % <SEP> coverage <SEP> = <SEP> 1. <SEP> t <SEP> Ca,uncoated <SEP> x <SEP> 100
 <tb>

EXAMPLE II

In this example, particles of cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor powder were coated with aluminum oxide by the method of the present invention, using the apparatus described in Example I. One hundred grams of calcium halophosphate phosphor powder (Cool White No. 4459, obtained from the Chemical and Metallurgical Division of GTE Products Corporation, Towanda, Pennsylvania) and 0.15g (0.05 weight percent) Aluminum Oxide C, available from Degussa, Inc., the fluidizing aid, were dry blended in a polyethylene jar to create a uniform dispersion of the Aluminum Oxide C fluidizing aid throughout the alkaline earth halophosphate powder. The mixture of the halophosphate phosphor powder and fluidizing aid was added to the quartz glass reaction tube to form the phosphor bed. Liquid trimethyl aluminum was used in the stainless steel bubbler as the coating precursor material.

The carrier gas was bubbled into the trimethyl aluminum liquid to form carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum. The carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported via a carrier line to the quartz glass reaction tube. Oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen was transported into the fluid bed through the holes located on the shaft of the vibrating mixer. The vibrating mixer was operated at a speed of 60 cycles/minute.

The bubbler and the nitrogen gas line leading into the bubbler were both heated to and maintained at a temperature of 300°C. The line leading out of the bubbler and into the bottom of the quartz glass reaction tube was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 45°C.

The frit area of the reaction tube was maintained at a temperature of from about 600°C to about 1500°C. The oxidizing gas inlet area, located above the vibrating disc, was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 400°C; and the area above the oxidizing gas inlet area was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 550°C.

A nitrogen flow of about 100 cc/min was passed into the bubbler, and the nitrogen gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported by nitrogen carrier gas into the reaction tube at a flow rate of about 550 cc/min.

The stream of oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen gas was passed into the reaction tube through the second carrier line. The flow rate of the oxygen was 495 cc/min and that of the nitrogen diluent was about 50 cc/min. A concentration ratio of O₂ to trimethyl aluminum of about 200 to 1 was maintained during this reaction to obtain a white body color.

The process was continued for 6 hours and an aluminum oxide coating having a thickness of about 1 Angstroms was formed on the phosphor particles.

Electron microscopy of the coated phosphor particles of this example indicated a smooth conformal coating of aluminum oxide on the cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor particles. The continuous conformal nature of the coating applied to the phosphor particle in the example was demonstrated by replication of the submicron features of the phosphor substrate. The submicron features of the coated particle, however, are visibly less pronounced when compared to the submicron features of an uncoated particle.

EXAMPLE III

In this example, particles of cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor powder were coated with aluminum oxide by the method of the present invention, using the apparatus described in Example I. One hundred grams of calcium halophosphate phosphor powder (Cool White No. 4459, obtained from the Chemical and Metallurgical

Division of GTE Products Corporation, Towanda, Pennsylvania) and 0.15g (0.05 weight percent) Aluminum Oxide C, available from Degussa, Inc., the fluidizing aid, were dry blended in a polyethylene jar to form a uniform dispersion of the Aluminum Oxide C fluidizing aid throughout the alkaline earth halophosphate powder. The mixture of the halophosphate phosphor powder and fluidizing aid was added to the quartz glass reaction tube to form the phosphor bed. Liquid trimethyl aluminum was used in the stainless steel bubbler as the coating precursor material.

The carrier gas was bubbled into the trimethyl aluminum liquid to form carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum. The carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported via the carrier line to the quartz glass reaction tube. Oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen was transported into the fluidized bed through the holes located on the shaft of the vibrating mixer.

The vibrating mixer was operated at a speed at 60 cycles/minute.

The bubbler and the nitrogen gas line leading into the bubbler were both heated to and maintained at temperature of 300°C. The line leading out of the bubbler and into the bottom of the quartz glass reaction tube was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 45°C.

The frit area of the reaction tube was maintained at a temperature of from about 600°C to about 1500°C; oxidizing gas inlet area, located above the vibrating disc, was heated to and maintained at a temperature about 400°C; and the area above the oxidizing gas inlet area was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 550°C.

A nitrogen flow of about 150 cc/min was passed into the bubbler, and the nitrogen gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported by nitrogen carrier gas into the reaction tube at a flow rate of about 100 cc/min.

The stream of oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen gas was passed into the reaction tube through the second carrier line. The flow rate of oxygen was about 495 cc/min and that of the nitrogen diluent was about 50 cc/min. A concentration ratio of 2 to trimethyl aluminum of about 200 to 1 was maintained during reaction to obtain a white body color.

The process was continued for 4 hours and an aluminum oxide coating having a thickness of about 1 Angstroms was formed on the phosphor particles.

Electron microscopy of the coated phosphor particles of this example indicated a smooth conformal coating of aluminum oxide on the cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor particles. The continuous and conformal nature of the coating applied to the phosphor particle in the example was demonstrated by the replication of the submicron features of the phosphor substrate. The submicron features of the coated particle, however, are visibly less pronounced when compared to the submicron features of an uncoated particle.

EXAMPLE IV

EXAMPLE IV

In this example, particles of cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor powder were coated with aluminum oxide by the method of the present invention, using the apparatus described in Example I. One hundred grams of calcium halophosphate phosphor powder (Cool White

No. 4459, obtained from the Chemical and Metallurgical

Division of GTE Products Corporation, Towanda,

Pennsylvania) and 0.15g (0.05 weight percent) Aluminum

Oxide C, available from Degussa, Inc., the fluidizing aid, were dry blended in a polyethylene jar to form a uniform dispersion of the Aluminum Oxide C fluidizing aid throughout the alkaline earth halophosphate powder. The mixture of the halophosphate phosphor powder and fluidizing aid was added to the quartz glass reaction tube to form the phosphor bed. Liquid trimethyl aluminum was used in the stainless steel bubbler as the coating precursor material.

The carrier gas was bubbled into the trimethyl aluminum liquid to form carrier gas containing vaporized trimethylaluminum. The carrier gas containing vaporized trimethylaluminum was transported via the carrier line to the quartz glass reaction tube. Oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen was transported into the fluidized bed through the holes located on the shaft of the vibrating mixer.

The vibrating mixer was operated at a speed at 60 cycles/minute.

The bubbler and the nitrogen gas line leading into the bubbler were both heated to and maintained at temperature of 300°C. The line leading out of the bubbler and into the bottom of the quartz glass reaction tube was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 450°C.

The frit area of the reaction tube was maintained at a temperature of from about 600°C to about 1500°C. The oxidizing gas inlet area, located above the vibrating disc, was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 400°C; and the area above the oxidizing gas inlet area was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 550°C.

A nitrogen flow of about 100 cc/min was passed into the bubbler, and the nitrogen gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported by nitrogen carrier gas into the reaction tube at a flow rate of about 550 cc/min.

The stream of oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen gas was passed into the reaction tube through the second carrier line. The flow rate of oxygen was about 495 cc/min and that of the nitrogen diluent was about 50 cc/min. A concentration ratio of 2 to trimethyl aluminum of about 200 to 1 was maintained during reaction to obtain a white body color.

The process was continued for 9 hours and an aluminum oxide coating having a thickness of about 1 Angstroms was formed on the phosphor particles.

Electron microscopy of the coated phosphor particles of this example indicated a smooth conformal coating of aluminum oxide on the cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor particles. The continuous conformal nature of the coating applied to the phosphor particle in the example was demonstrated by replication of the submicron features of the phosphor substrate. The submicron features of the coated particle, however, are visibly less pronounced when compared to the submicron features of an uncoated particle.

EXAMPLE V

In this example, particles of cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor powder were coated with aluminum oxide by the method of the present invention, using the apparatus described in Example I. One hundred grams of calcium halophosphate phosphor powder (Cool White No. 4459, obtained from the Chemical and Metallurgical Division of GTE- Products Corporation, Towanda, Pennsylvania) and 0.15 g (0.05 weight percent) Aluminum Oxide C, available from Degussa, Inc., the fluidizing aid, were dry blended in a polyethylene jar to form a uniform dispersion of the Aluminum Oxide C fluidizing aid throughout the alkaline earth halophosphate powder. The mixture of the halophosphate phosphor powder and fluidizing aid was added to the quartz glass reaction tube to form the phosphor bed. Liquid trimethyl aluminum was used in the stainless steel bubbler as the coating precursor material.

The carrier gas was bubbled into the trimethyl aluminum liquid to form carrier gas containing vaporized trimethylaluminum. The carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported via the carrier line to the quartz glass reaction tube. Oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen was transported into the fluidized bed through the holes located on the shaft of the vibrating mixer.

The vibrating mixer was operated at a speed at 60 cycles/minute. -

The bubbler and the nitrogen gas line leading into the bubbler were both heated to and maintained at temperature of 300°C. The line leading out of the bubbler and into the bottom of the quartz glass reaction tube was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 450°C.

The frit area of the reaction tube was maintained at a temperature of from about 600°C to about 1500°C. The oxidizing gas inlet area, located above the vibrating disc, was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 460°C; and the area above the oxidizing gas inlet area was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 550°C.

A nitrogen flow of about 150 cc/min was passed into the bubbler, and the nitrogen gas containing vaporized triethyl aluminum was transported by nitrogen carrier gas into the reaction tube at a flow of about 550 cc/min.

The stream of oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen gas was passed into the reaction tube through the second carrier line. The flow rate of oxygen was about 495 cc/min and that of the nitrogen diluent was about 50 cc/min. A concentration ratio of 2 to trimethyl aluminum of about 200 to 1 was maintained in this reaction to obtain a white body color.

The process was continued for 9 hours and an aluminum oxide coating having a thickness of about 1 Angstroms was formed on the phosphor particles.

Electron microscopy of the coated phosphor particles of this example indicated a smooth conformal coating of aluminum oxide on the cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor particles. The continuous and conformal nature of the coating applied to the phosphor particle in the example was demonstrated by the replication of the submicron features of the phosphor substrate. The submicron features of the coated particle, however, are visibly less pronounced when compared to the submicron features of an uncoated particle.

EXAMPLE VI

In this example, particles of cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor powder were coated with aluminum oxide by the method of the present invention, using the apparatus described in Example I. One hundred grams of calcium halophosphate phosphor powder (Cool White No. 4459, obtained from the Chemical and Metallurgical Division of GTE Products Corporation, Towanda, Pennsylvania) and 0.15g (0.05 weight percent) Aluminum Oxide C, available from Degussa, Inc., the fluidizing aid, were dry blended in a polyethylene jar to form a uniform dispersion of the Aluminum Oxide C fluidizing aid throughout the alkaline earth halophosphate powder. The mixture of the halophosphate phosphor powder and fluidizing aid was added to the quartz glass reaction tube to form the phosphor bed. Liquid trimethyl aluminum was used in the stainless steel bubbler as the coating precursor material.

The carrier gas was bubbled into the trimethyl aluminum liquid to form carrier gases containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum. The carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported via the carrier line to the quartz glass reaction tube. Oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen was transported into the fluidized bed through the holes located on the shaft of the vibrating mixer.

The vibrating mixer was operated at a speed of 60 cycles/minute.

The bubbler and the nitrogen gas line leading into the bubbler were both heated to and maintained at temperature of 300°C. The line leading out of the bubbler and into the bottom of the quartz glass reaction tube was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 450°C.

The frit area of the reaction tube was maintained at a temperature of from about 600°C to about 1500°C. The oxidizing gas inlet area, located above the vibrating disc, was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 400°C; and the area above the oxidizing gas inlet area was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 550°C.

of about 550°C.

A nitrogen flow of about 150 cc/min was passed into the bubbler, and the nitrogen gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported by nitrogen carrier gas into the reaction tube at a flow rate of about 500 cc/min.

The stream of oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen gas was passed into the reaction tube through the second carrier line. The flow rate of oxygen was about 495 cc/min and that of the nitrogen diluent was about 50 cc/min. A concentration ratio of O₂ to trimethyl aluminum of about 200 to 1 was maintained during this reaction to obtain a white body color.

The process was continued for 8 hours and an aluminum oxide coating having a thickness of about 200 Å was formed on the phosphor particles.

Electron microscopy of the coated phosphor particles of this example indicated a smooth conformal coating of aluminum oxide on the cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor particles. The continuous conformal nature of the coating applied to the phosphor particle in the example was demonstrated by replication of the submicron features of the phosphor substrate. The submicron features of the coated particle, however, are visibly less pronounced when compared to the submicron features of an uncoated particle.

EXAMPLE VII

In this example, particles of cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor powder were coated with aluminum oxide by the method of the present invention, using the apparatus described in Example I. One hundred grams of calcium halophosphate phosphor powder (Cool White No. 4459, obtained from the Chemical and Metallurgical Division of GTE Products Corporation, Towanda, Pennsylvania) and 0.15 g (0.05 weight percent) Aluminum Oxide C, available from Degussa, Inc., the fluidizing aid, were dry blended in a polyethylene jar to form a uniform dispersion of the Aluminum Oxide C fluidizing aid throughout the alkaline earth halophosphate powder. The mixture of the halophosphate phosphor powder and fluidizing aid was added to the quartz glass reaction tube to form the phosphor bed. Liquid trimethyl aluminum was used in the stainless steel bubbler as the coating precursor material.

The carrier gas was bubbled into the trimethyl aluminum liquid to form carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum. The carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported via the first carrier line to the quartz glass reaction tube. Oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen was transported into the fluidized bed through the holes located on the shaft of the vibrating mixer.

The vibrating mixer was operated at a speed of 60 cycles/minute.

The bubbler and the nitrogen gas line leading into the bubbler were both heated to and maintained at a temperature of 300°C. The line leading out of the bubbler and into the bottom of the quartz glass reaction tube was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 450°C.

The frit area of the reaction tube was maintained at a temperature of from about 600°C to about 1500°C. The oxidizing gas inlet area, located above the vibrating disc, was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 400°C; and the area above the oxidizing gas inlet area was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 550°C.

A nitrogen flow of about 150 cc/min was passed into the bubbler, and the nitrogen gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported by nitrogen carrier gas into the reaction tube at a flow rate of about 500 cc/min.

The stream of oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen gas was passed into the reaction tube through the second

carrier line. The flow rate of oxygen was about 495cc/min and that of the nitrogen diluent was about 50cc/min. A concentration ratio of O₂ to trimethyl aluminum of about 200 to 1 was maintained during this reaction to obtain a white body color.

The process was continued for 12 hours and an aluminum oxide coating having a thickness of about 300 Angstroms was formed on the phosphor particles.

Electron microscopy of the coated phosphor particles of this example indicated a smooth conformal coating of aluminum oxide on the cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor particles. The continuous and conformal nature of the coating applied to the phosphor particle in the example was demonstrated by the replication of the submicron features of the phosphor substrate. The submicron features of the coated particle, however, are visibly less pronounced when compared to the submicron features of an uncoated particle.

EXAMPLE VIII

In this example, particles of cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor powder were coated with aluminum oxide by the method of the present invention, using the apparatus described in Example I. One hundred grams of calcium halophosphate phosphor powder (Cool White No. 4459, obtained from the Chemical and Metallurgical Division of GTE Products Corporation, Towanda, Pennsylvania) and 0.15g (0.05 weight percent) Aluminum Oxide C, available from Degussa, Inc., the fluidizing aid, were dry blended in a polyethylene jar to form a uniform dispersion of the Aluminum Oxide C fluidizing aid throughout the alkaline earth halophosphate powder. The mixture of the halophosphate phosphor powder and fluidizing aid was added to the quartz glass reaction tube to form the phosphor bed. Liquid trimethylaluminum was used in the stainless steel bubbler as the coating precursor material.

The carrier gas was bubbled into the trimethyl aluminum liquid form carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum. The carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported via the carrier line to the quartz glass reaction tube. Oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen was transported into the fluidized bed through the holds located on the shaft of the vibrating mixer. The vibrating mixer was operated at a speed of 60 cycles/minute.

The bubbler and the nitrogen gas line leading into the bubbler were both heated to and maintained at a temperature of 300°C. The line leading out of the bubbler and into the bottom of the quartz glass reaction tube was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 450°C.

The frit area of the reaction tube was maintained at a temperature of from about 600°C to about 1500°C; the oxidizing gas inlet area, located above the vibrating disc, was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 1000°C; and the area above the oxidizing gas inlet area was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 550°C.

A nitrogen flow of about 200cc/min was passed into the bubbler, and the nitrogen gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported by nitrogen carrier gas into the reaction tube at a flow of about 450cc/min.

The stream of oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen gas was passed into the reaction tube through the second carrier line. The flow rate of oxygen was about 496cc/min and that of the nitrogen diluent was about 50cc/min. A concentration ratio of O₂ to trimethyl aluminum of about 200 to 1 was maintained during this reaction to obtain a white body color.

The process was continued for 12 hours and an aluminum oxide coating having a thickness of about 300 Angstroms was formed on the phosphor particles.

Electron microscopy of the coated phosphor particles of this example indicated a smooth conformal

coating of aluminum oxide on the cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor particles. The continuous and conformal nature of the coating applied to the phosphor particle in the example was demonstrated by the replication of the submicron features of the phosphor substrate. The submicron features of the coated particle, however, are visibly less pronounced when compared to the submicron features of an uncoated particle.

SES photomicrographs of uncoated cool white phosphor particles, uncoated cool white phosphor particles which had been mechanically mixed with 0.05 weight percent Aluminum Oxide C, and cool white phosphor particles which had been coated with alumina by the method of the present invention to varying coating thicknesses were compared.

The photomicrographs revealed that as the coating thickness is increased above 150 Angstroms, a preferential growth of the alumina coating is visible on those parts of the phosphor particle to which Aluminum Oxide C particles had adhered during the powder preparation. This effect becomes increasingly more visible as the coating thickness increases. Also the surface texture becomes less clearly pronounced with increasing coating thickness under very high resolution (50,000 - 100,000 X) SEEI analysis.

EXAMPLE IX

In this example, particles of cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor powder were coated with aluminum oxide by the method of the present invention, using the apparatus described in Example I. One hundred grams of calcium halophosphate phosphor powder (Cool White No. 4459, obtained from the Chemical and Metallurgical Division of GTE Products Corporation, Towanda, Pennsylvania) without a fluidizing aid were added to the quartz glass reaction tube to form the phosphor bed.

Liquid trimethyl aluminum was used in the stainless steel bubbler as the coating precursor material. Carrier gas was bubbled into the trimethyl aluminum liquid to form carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum. The carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported via the carrier line to the quartz glass reaction tube. Oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen was transported into the fluidized bed through the holes located on the shaft of the vibrating mixer. The vibrating mixer was operated at a speed at 60 cycles/minute.

The bubbler and the nitrogen gas line leading into the bubbler were both heated to and maintained at a temperature of 300°C. The line leading out of the bubbler into the bottom of the quartz glass reaction tube was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 450°C.

The frit area of the reaction tube was maintained at a temperature of from about 600°C to about 1500°C. The oxidizing gas inlet area, located above the vibrating disc, was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 400°C; and the area above the oxidizing gas inlet area was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 550°C.

A nitrogen flow of about 100 cc/min was passed into the bubbler, and the nitrogen gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported by nitrogen carrier into the reaction tube at a flow rate of about 450 cc/min.

The stream of oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen gas was passed into the reaction tube through a second carrier line. The flow rate of oxygen was about 496 cc/min and that of the nitrogen diluent was about 50 cc/min. A concentration ratio of 2 to trimethyl aluminum of about 200 to 1 was maintained during this reaction.

The process was continued for 6 hours and an aluminum oxide coating, having a thickness of about 150 Angstroms was formed on the phosphor particles.

Electron microscopy of the coated phosphor particles of this example indicated a smooth conformal

coating of aluminum oxide on the cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor particles. The continuous and conformal nature of the coating applied to the phosphor particle in the example was demonstrated by the replication of the submicron features of the phosphor substrate. The submicron features of the coated particle, however, are visibly less pronounced when compared to the submicron features of an uncoated particle.

Auger analysis of the coated particle surface revealed that complete surface coverage.

It was observed, however, that phosphor particles coated without the use of the fluidizing aid exhibit off-white body color and reflected a loss in brightness.

The poor body color is attributed to the poor circulation of the precursor material through the bed due to less than maximum bed expansion in the absence of the fluidizing aid.

The coating thicknesses reported in each of the preceding examples is calculated using the following equation: $t = \frac{\text{grams Al}_2\text{O}_3/\text{hour}}{\text{coating rate (g/cc)} \times \text{Surface area} \times \text{total loading (g)}}$

The phosphor particle of the present invention having a continuous protective aluminum oxide coating surrounding its outer surface has improved performance over the uncoated phosphor. This performance improvement is demonstrated in the following Use Examples in which aluminum oxide coated phosphor particles of the present invention are used in fluorescent lamps. Fluorescent lamps typically experience a gradual decrease in light output with increasing hours of use. A variety of factors contribute to the decrease in light output during lamp operation. These factors include deposits of impurities from the cathode; formation of various mercury compounds due to the bombardment of the phosphor by atoms and ions of mercury; changes in the phosphor itself; and changes in the glass envelope, particularly where it may be subject to ultraviolet radiation. The ability of such lamps to resist the drop-off in light output is generally termed lumen maintenance which is measured as the ratio of light output at a given life span compared to an initial light output and expressed as a percentage.

While the decrease in light output with time is an occurrence for all fluorescent lamps, it presents a greater problem for high output and very high output lamps than for normally loaded lamps, and for phosphors particularly susceptible to degradation in the hostile environment of the discharge.

Although all of the factors listed above can be present to a greater or lesser degree in acting to reduce light output, it is presently believed that one of the primary causes of the drop-off in light output during operation is the formation of mercury compounds particularly on the surface of the phosphor coating.

These mercury compounds are believed to form an ultraviolet radiation absorbing film which prevents the phosphor from being sufficiently excited by the radiation from the mercury discharge to achieve maximum light output.

Various uses of alumina have been proposed to improve lamp performance. One such use involves employing a layer of alumina on the interior of the bulb wall and applying the phosphor layer thereon. Another use is the application of a thin layer of alumina over the phosphor layer.

While these techniques provide some benefit, it is believed that obtaining further increases in lumen maintenance while applying only one layer of material to the inner surface of the lamp envelope is desirable. By using phosphor particles having continuous aluminum oxide coatings surrounding the surface of each particle in a fluorescent lamp, one can obtain significant increases in lumen maintenance while applying only one layer of material to the lamp envelope.

In accordance with the method of the present invention for improving lumen maintenance of fluorescent lamps, a continuous aluminum oxide coating is deposited on individual particles of a finely-divided

fluorescent lamp phosphor powder to form individually and continuously coated phosphor particles.

The inner surface of a fluorescent lamp envelope is then coated with one or more layers of phosphor layer of phosphor applied to the envelope contains at least one phosphor component. A phosphor which contains more than one phosphor component is more commonly referred to as a phosphor blend. At one of the phosphor layers applied to the lamp envelope has a phosphor component comprising individually and continuously coated phosphor particles. The coated envelope is then processed into a finished lamp according to known techniques. In those lamps containing more than one phosphor layer, a layer containing the individually and continuously coated phosphor particles is preferably the last layer of phosphor applied to the lamp envelope, i.e., the layer directly adjacent to arc generating medium within the lamp.

"Continuous", as used to describe the aluminum oxide coating herein, means non-particulate, i.e., the aluminum oxide coating surrounding each phosphor particle does not consist of individual aluminum oxide particles.

The key features of the aluminum oxide coated phosphor particles of the present invention are: (1) the continuous, or non-particulate, nature of the coating on each particle; (2) the conformal nature of the coating on each particle, replicating submicron features found naturally occurring on the uncoated phosphor particles; and (3) that each phosphor particle is individually coated.

These key features of the coated phosphor particle of the present invention are established and/or supported by Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM), Auger analysis, reflection electron diffraction techniques, and measurements.

Scanning electron microscopy of the coated particles shows that the particles are individually coated the aluminum oxide coating on the phosphor particles is continuous and does not consist of aluminum oxide particles; and that the coating is conformal, replicating the submicron features of the underlying phosphor particle.

Auger analysis indicates that the coating provides substantially complete coverage of the outer surface of the phosphor particle.

Reflection electron diffraction shows the aluminum oxide coating to be continuous and noncrystalline amorphous.

BET measurements support the conformal and continuous nature of the aluminum oxide coating to the extent the surface area of the coated phosphor is not appreciably changed when compared to the surface area of the uncoated phosphor. If the coating were particulate in nature, the surface area of the coated phosphor would be significantly increased. BET measurements also support that the phosphor particles are individually coated.

A fluorescent lamp phosphor comprises any material excited to fluorescence by ultra-violet radiation.

Examples of such phosphors include but are not to be construed as being limited to, alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor and manganese-doped zinc orthosilicate phosphor.

In a preferred embodiment, the continuous aluminum oxide coating is deposited by chemical vapor deposition in a fluidized bed, e.g., an aluminum-containing precursor material is deposited on the outer surface of phosphor powder particles while the particles are suspended in an inert gas stream and the aluminum-containing precursor material is reacted to form aluminum oxide. Examples of suitable precursors of the aluminum-containing compounds include alkylaluminum compounds; aluminum alkoxides; and aluminum acetylacetonates.

In the preferred embodiment, the fluidized bed is formed by passing an inert gas through the phosphor particles in order to suspend the particles in the inert gas stream. Examples of inert gases suitable for this method include nitrogen, argon, helium, neon, or mixtures thereof. In addition to supporting the phosphor particles in a fluidized bed, the inert gas functions as a carrier gas. A volatilizable aluminum containing coating precursor material is vaporized into the inert gas before the inert gas enters the reaction chamber in which the phosphor particles become suspended. Preferably the carrier gas is saturated with vapor of the aluminum containing coating precursor material. As the carrier gas containing the vapor of the aluminum containing coating precursor material passes upwardly through the phosphor particles to suspend the particles in a fluidized bed, the particles are enveloped by the vapor of the coating precursor material which is contained in the carrier gas.

Preferably, the fluidized particles are exposed to the vaporized aluminum containing precursor material at a first temperature, the first temperature being less than the temperature at which the precursor material decomposes. After the particles have been enveloped by the precursor material, the precursor material reacts to form a continuous aluminum oxide coating on the surface of the individual particles at a second temperature, the second temperature being greater than or equal to the temperature at which the precursor material reacts to form aluminum oxide.

The fluidized bed is most preferably maintained in a temperature gradient ranging from a lowest temperature to a highest temperature. The lowest temperature should be less than the temperature at which the coating precursor material will decompose, while the highest temperature should be equal to or greater than the temperature at which the coating precursor material reacts to form the desired aluminum oxide coating material.

An oxidizing gas, if necessary, is introduced into the fluidized bed separately from the carrier gas containing the vaporized coating precursor material. The use of an oxidizing gas is optional when an oxygen-containing precursor material is used. Examples of suitable oxidizing gases are air or oxygen. An oxidizing gas may be mixed with a diluent inert gas.

The thickness of the coating is dependent upon the amount of time the process is run, the temperature of the evaporation source, and the flow rate through the evaporation source, and the surface area of the phosphor.

The process is continued for a sufficient time to form a continuous aluminum oxide coating of a predetermined thickness on the outer surface of the individual phosphor particles.

One or more layers of phosphor are applied to the inner surface of a fluorescent lamp envelope. At least one of the phosphor layers applied to the lamp envelope contains a phosphor component comprising individually and continuously coated phosphor particles. The phosphor coated envelope is then processed into a finished lamp according to known techniques.

As used herein, the term, "fluorescent lamp" refers to any lamp containing a phosphor excited to fluorescence by ultraviolet radiation, regardless of configuration.

Referring now to the drawing of Fig. 2 with greater particularity, there is shown in Fig. 2 one example of a fluorescent lamp 24 comprising a tubular, hermetically sealed, glass envelope 25. Electrodes 26 and 27 are sealed in the ends of envelope 25. Electrodes 26 and 27 project from envelope 25. An arc generating and sustaining medium such as one or more inert gases and mercury vapor is included within envelope 25.

A coating of phosphor 30 is applied to the inside surface of envelope 25. The coating 30 includes a phosphor comprising particles of a finely-divided fluorescent lamp phosphor which have been individually coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating. While the fluorescent lamp phosphor can be any material useful in fluorescent lamps, the invention herein described is particularly efficacious when the phosphor powder is alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor or manganese doped zinc orthosilicate phosphor powder.

The following Use Examples are given to enable those skilled in this art to more clearly understand and practice the present invention and to more clearly demonstrate some advantages of the present invention.

These Use Examples should not be considered as a limitation upon the scope of the present invention merely as being illustrative and representative thereof.

The phosphor numbers given in the Use Examples below are the identifying numbers utilized by GT Products Corporation, Towanda, Pennsylvania, from which company the phosphors were obtained.

USE EXAMPLE I

Individually and continuously coated phosphor particles prepared in accordance with Example I were applied to a fluorescent lamp envelope, and processed into a finished lamp according to known techniques including the step of slurring the phosphor in an organic solvent containing 1% by weight Aluminum Oxide C by normal wet sieving.

USE EXAMPLE II

Uncoated particles of calcium halophosphate (Cool White No. 4459, Lot 795) were admixed with 0.05% by weight Aluminum Oxide C and applied to a fluorescent lamp envelope and processed into a finished lamp according to known techniques, identical to those of Use Example I.

USE EXAMPLE III

Uncoated particles of calcium halophosphate (Cool White No. 4459, Lot 795) were applied to a fluorescent lamp envelope and processed into a finished lamp according to known techniques, identical to those of Use Example I.

USE EXAMPLE IV

Particles of calcium halophosphate (Cool White No.

4459, Lot 795) were coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating as described in Example I. The coated phosphor particles were applied to the lamp envelope in an aqueous suspension containing 1% by weight Aluminum Oxide C and processed into a finished lamp by known techniques. There was no milling of the phosphor during the fabrication procedure.

USE EXAMPLE V

A lamp was prepared in accordance with Use Example IV with inclusion of the additional step of gemmilling.

The phosphor luminance and maintenance data for the standard 4 Foot T-12 (40 Watt) cool white fluorescent lamps of Use Examples I-V appear in Table I.

TABLE I

USE PHOSPHOR LUMINANCE

EXAMPLE	SUSPENSION	PHOSPHOR	(MAINTENANCE)	0	100	500	1,000	2,000	3,000	5,000	
HOURS	HOURS	HOURS	HOURS	HOURS	HOURS	HOURS	HOURS	HOURS	HOURS	HOURS	
I Organic Al ₂ O ₃ -Coated Lot 795	3216	3115	3082	3035	2965	2935	2858	(96.8)	(95.8)	(94.4)	(92.3)
(88.9)											
II Organic Admixed 0.05%	3253	3080	2973	2901	2818	2792	2699	"ALON C"	(94.7)	(91.4)	(89.2)
(85.8)	(82.9)	+ Uncoated Lot 795									
III Organic Uncoated Lot 795	3253	3118	3031	2964	2884	2854	2791	(95.8)	(93.2)	(91.1)	(88.7)
(85.8)											
IV Water Al ₂ O ₃ -Coated Lot 795	3189	3105	3044	2995	2914	2839	2755	(97.4)	(95.4)	(93.9)	(91.4)

(86.4)

V Water Al₂O₃-Coated Lot 795 3224 3104 3027 2965 2838 2798 2696 (96.3) (93.9) (92.0) (88.0) (83.6)

As shown in Table I, while the uncoated phosphor has a higher lumen output at 0 hours, the maintenance of phosphor particles having continuous aluminum oxide coatings is improved over uncoated phosphor particles.

The effect of the phosphor coating on fluorescent lamp phosphor maintenance was further evaluated in the standard 4 Foot T12 VHO (Very High Output) lamp:

USE EXAMPLE VI

Uncoated particles of calcium halophosphate (Cool White No. 4459, Lot 501) were applied to the lamp envelope in an aqueous suspension and processed to a finished lamp by known techniques.

USE EXAMPLE VII

Particles of calcium halophosphate (Cool White No.

4459, Lot 501) were coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating as described in Example I. The coated phosphor particles were applied to the lamp envelope in an aqueous suspension and processed to a finished lamp by known techniques. There was no milling of the phosphor during the fabrication process.

The phosphor luminance and maintenance data for the 4 Foot T-12 VUQ cool white fluorescent lamps of Use Examples VI and VII appear in Table II.

TABLE II

USE PHOSPHOR LUMINANCE

EX. SOLVENT PHOSPHOR METHOD (MAINTENANCE) 0 100 300 500 1,000 2,000 3,000 4,000 5,000

HOURS HOURS HOURS HOURS HOURS HOURS HOURS HOURS HOURS

VI Water Uncoated "Milled" 7704 6981 6763 6470 6085 5479 4952 4681 4368 (90.6) (87.8) (84.0) (71.1) (64.3) (60.8) (56.7)

VII Water Al₂O₃-Coated Stirred 7696 6997 6866 6621 6335 6014 5464 5351 5134

In (90.9) (89.2) (86.0) (82.3) (78.1) (71.0) (69.5) (66.7)

As can be seen from Tables I and II, while the uncoated phosphor is initially brighter, the light output of the uncoated phosphor decreases more rapidly as a function of time than the coated phosphor of the present invention. The lamps provided with the coated phosphor also exhibit a resistance to degradation of the phosphor during the lehring step of lamp fabrication.

The effect of the thickness of the aluminum oxide particle coating on fluorescent lamp maintenance was further evaluated in the standard 4 foot-T12 VHO lamp:

USE EXAMPLE VIII

In this example, uncoated particles of cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor powder (Cool White No. 4459, Lot 769) were applied to the inner surface of the lamp envelope according to known techniques including the steps of slurring the phosphor in an aqueous suspension containing 1.75% by weight Aluminum Oxide C and normal wet sieving.

including the steps of slurring the phosphor in an aqueous suspension containing 1.75% by weight Aluminum Oxide C and normal wet sieving.

USE EXAMPLE IX

In this example, particles of cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor powder were individually coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating, using the apparatus described in Example I. Three hundred grams of calcium halophosphate phosphor powder (Cool White No.

4459, Lot 769) and 0.15g. (0.105 weight percent) Aluminum

Oxide C, available from Degussa, Inc., the fluidizing aid, were dry blended in a polyethylene jar to

a uniform dispersion of the Aluminum Oxide C fluidizing aid throughout the alkaline earth halophosphate powder. The mixture of the halophosphate phosphor powder and fluidizing aid was added to the quartz glass reaction tube to form the phosphor bed. Liquid trimethyl aluminum was used in the stainless steel bubbler as the coating precursor material.

The carrier gas was bubbled into the trimethyl aluminum liquid to form carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum. The carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported via a line to the quartz glass reaction tube. Oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen was transported into the fluid bed through the holes located on the shaft of the vibrating mixer. The vibrating mixer was operated at a speed of 60 cycles/minute.

The bubbler and the nitrogen gas line leading into the bubbler were both heated to and maintained at a temperature of 300°C. The line leading out of the bubbler and into the bottom of the quartz glass reaction tube was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 450°C.

The frit area of the reaction tube was maintained at a temperature of from about 60°C to about 150°C. The oxidizing gas inlet area, located above the vibrating disc, was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 400°C; and the area above the oxidizing gas inlet area was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 550°C.

A nitrogen flow of about 100 cc/min was passed into the bubbler, and the nitrogen gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported by nitrogen carrier gas into the reaction tube at a flow rate of about 550 cc/min.

The stream of oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen gas was passed into the reaction tube through the second carrier line. The flow rate of the oxygen was 495 cc/min and that of the nitrogen diluent was about 50 cc/min. A concentration ratio of O₂ to trimethyl aluminum of about 200 to 1 was maintained during this reaction to obtain a white body color.

The process was continued for 6 hours and an aluminum oxide coating having a thickness of about 1 Angstroms was formed on the phosphor particles.

Electron microscopy of the coated phosphor particles of this example indicated a smooth conformal coating of aluminum oxide on the cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor particles. The continuous and conformal nature of the coating applied to the phosphor particle in the example was demonstrated by the replication of the submicron features of the phosphor substrate.

The submicron features of the coated particle, however, are visibly less pronounced when compared to submicron features of an uncoated particle.

The coated phosphor particles were applied to the inner surface of the lamp envelope according to known techniques, including the steps of slurring the coated phosphor in an aqueous suspension containing 1.75% by weight Aluminum Oxide C and normal wet sieving.

USE EXAMPLE X

In this example, particles of cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor powder were individually coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating, using the apparatus described in Example I. Three hundred grams of calcium halophosphate phosphor powder (Cool White No.

4459, Lot 769) and 0.15 g (0.05 weight percent) Aluminum Oxide C, available from Degussa, Inc., the fluidizing aid, were dry blended in a polyethylene jar to form a uniform dispersion of the Aluminum Oxide C fluidizing aid throughout the alkaline earth halophosphate powder. The mixture of the halophosphate phosphor powder and fluidizing aid was added to the quartz glass reaction tube to form the phosphor bed. Liquid trimethyl aluminum was used in the stainless steel bubbler as the coating precursor material.

The carrier gas was bubbled into the trimethyl aluminum liquid to form carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum. The carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported via the carrier line to the quartz glass reaction tube. Oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen was transported into the fluidized bed through the holes located on the shaft of the vibrating mixer.

The vibrating mixer was operated at a speed of 60 cycles per minute.

The bubbler and the nitrogen gas line leading into the bubbler were both heated to and maintained at a temperature of 300°C. The line leading out of the bubbler and into the bottom of the quartz glass reaction tube was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 450°C.

The frit area of the reaction tube was maintained at a temperature of from about 600°C to about 1500°C. The oxidizing gas inlet area, located above the vibrating disc, was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 400°C; and the area above the oxidizing gas inlet area was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 550°C.

A nitrogen flow of about 150 cc/min was passed into the bubbler, and the nitrogen gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported by nitrogen carrier gas into the reaction tube at a flow rate of about 500 cc/min.

The stream of oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen gas was passed into the reaction tube through the second carrier line. The flow rate of oxygen was about 495 cc/min and that of the nitrogen diluent was about 50 cc/min. A concentration ratio of oxygen to trimethyl aluminum of about 200 to 1 was maintained during reaction to obtain a white body color.

The process was continued for 4 hours and an aluminum oxide coating having a thickness of about 100 Å was formed on the phosphor particles.

Electron microscopy of the coated phosphor particles of this example indicated a smooth conformal coating of aluminum oxide on the cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor particles. The continuous and conformal nature of the coating applied to the phosphor particle in the example was demonstrated by the replication of the submicron features of the phosphor substrate. The submicron features of the coated particle, however, are visibly less pronounced when compared to the submicron features of an uncoated particle.

The coated phosphor particles were applied to the inner surface of the lamp envelope according to known techniques, including the steps of slurring the coated phosphor in an aqueous suspension containing 1.75% by weight Aluminum Oxide C and normal wet sieving.

USE EXAMPLE XI

In this example, particles of cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor powder were individually coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating, using the apparatus described in Example I. Three hundred grams of calcium halophosphate phosphor powder (Cool White No.

4459, Lot 769) and 0.15 g (0.05 weight percent) Aluminum Oxide C, available from Degussa, Inc., the fluidizing aid, were dry blended in a polyethylene jar to form a uniform dispersion of the Aluminum Oxide C fluidizing aid throughout the alkaline earth halophosphate powder. The mixture of the halophosphate phosphor powder and fluidizing aid was added to the quartz glass reaction tube to form the phosphor bed. Liquid trimethylaluminum was used in the stainless steel bubbler as the coating precursor material.

The carrier gas was bubbled into the trimethyl aluminum liquid to form carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum. The carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported via the carrier line to the quartz glass reaction tube. Oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen was transported into the

fluidized bed through the holes located on the shaft of the vibrating mixer.

The vibrating mixer was operated at a speed at 60 cycles 1 minute.

The bubbler and the nitrogen gas line leading into the bubbler were both heated to and maintained at a temperature of 30°C etc. The line leading out of the bubbler and into the bottom of the quartz glass reaction tube was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 450°C.

The frit area of the reaction tube was maintained at a temperature of from about 600°C to about 1500°C. The oxidizing gas inlet area, located above the vibrating disc, was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 400°C; and the area above the oxidizing gas inlet area was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 550°C.

A nitrogen flow of about 100 cc/min was passed into the bubbler, and the nitrogen gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported by nitrogen carrier gas into the reaction tube at a flow rate of about 100 cc/min.

The stream of oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen gas was passed into the reaction tube through the second carrier line. The flow rate of oxygen was about 495 cc/min and that of the nitrogen diluent was about 10 cc/min. A concentration ratio of 2 to trimethyl aluminum of about 200 to 1 was maintained in this reaction to obtain a white body color.

The process was continued for 9 hours and an aluminum oxide coating having a thickness of about 1 Angstroms was formed on the phosphor particles.

Electron microscopy of the coated phosphor particles of this example indicated a smooth conformal coating of aluminum oxide on the cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor particles. The continuous and conformal nature of the coating applied to the phosphor particle in the example was demonstrated by the replication of the submicron features of the phosphor substrate. The submicron features of the coated particle, however, are visibly less pronounced when compared to the submicron features of an uncoated particle.

The coated phosphor particles were applied to the inner surface of the lamp envelope according to known techniques, including the steps of slurring the coated phosphor in an aqueous suspension containing 75% by weight Aluminum Oxide C and normal wet sieving.

USE EXAMPLE XII

In this example, particles of cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor powder were individually coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating, using the apparatus described in Example I. Three hundred grams of calcium halophosphate phosphor powder (Cool White No.

4459, Lot 769) and 0.15g (0.05 weight percent) Aluminum Oxide C, available from Degussa, Inc., the fluidizing aid, were dry blended in a polyethylene jar to form a uniform dispersion of the Aluminum Oxide C fluidizing aid throughout the alkaline earth halophosphate powder. The mixture of the halophosphate phosphor powder and fluidizing aid was added to the quartz glass reaction tube to form the phosphor bed. Liquid trimethyl aluminum was used in the stainless steel bubbles as the coating precursor material.

The carrier gas was bubbled into the trimethyl aluminum liquid to form carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum. The carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported via the second carrier line to the quartz glass reaction tube. Oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen was transported into the fluidized bed through the holes located on the shaft of the vibrating mixer.

The vibrating mixer was operated at a speed at 60 cycles/ minute.

The bubbler and the nitrogen gas line leading into the bubbler were both heated to and maintained at temperature of 30°C. The line leading out of the bubbler and into the bottom of the quartz glass reaction tube was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 450°C.

The frit area of the reaction tube was maintained at a temperature of from about 60°C to about 150°C. The oxidizing gas inlet area, located above the vibrating disc, was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 400°C; and the area above the oxidizing gas inlet area was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 550°C.

A nitrogen flow of about 150 cc/min was passed into the bubbler, and the nitrogen gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported by nitrogen carrier gas into the reaction tube at a flow rate of about 550 cc/min.

The stream of oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen gas was passed into the reaction tube through the second carrier line. The flow rate of oxygen was about 495 cc/min and that of the nitrogen diluent was about 50 cc/min. A concentration ratio of oxygen to trimethyl aluminum of about 200 to 1 was maintained in this reaction to obtain a white body color.

The process was continued for 9 hours and an aluminum oxide coating having a thickness of about 1 Angstroms was formed on the phosphor particles.

Electron microscopy of the coated phosphor particles of this example indicated a smooth conformal coating of aluminum oxide on the cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor particles. The continuous and conformal nature of the coating applied to the phosphor particle in the example was demonstrated by the replication of the submicron features of the phosphor substrate. The submicron features of the coated particle, however, are visibly less pronounced when compared to the submicron features of an uncoated particle.

The coated phosphor particles were applied to the inner surface of the lamp envelope according to known techniques, including the steps of slurrying the coated phosphor in an aqueous suspension containing 1 part by weight Aluminum Oxide C and normal wet sieving.

USE EXAMPLE XIII

In this example, particles of cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor powder were individually coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating, using the apparatus described in Example I. Three hundred grams of calcium halophosphate phosphor powder (Cool White No.

4459, Lot 769) and 0.15 g (0.05 weight percent) Aluminum Oxide C, available from Degussa, Inc., the fluidizing aid, were dry blended in a polyethylene jar to form a uniform dispersion of the Aluminum Oxide C fluidizing aid throughout the alkaline earth halophosphate powder. The mixture of the halophosphate phosphor powder and fluidizing aid was added to the quartz glass reaction tube to form the phosphor bed. Liquid trimethyl aluminum was used in the stainless steel bubbler as the coating precursor material.

The carrier gas was bubbled into the trimethyl aluminum liquid to form carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum. The carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported via the second carrier line to the quartz glass reaction tube. Oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen was transported into the fluidized bed through the holes located on the shaft of the vibrating mixer.

The vibrating mixer was operated at a speed of 60 cycles per minute.

The bubbler and the nitrogen gas line leading into the bubbler were both heated to and maintained at a temperature of 300°C. The line leading out of the bubbler and into the bottom of the quartz glass reaction tube was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 450°C.

The frit area of the reaction tube was maintained at a temperature of from about 609°C to about 1500°C. The oxidizing gas inlet area, located above the vibrating disc, was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 4000°C; and the area above the oxidizing gas inlet area was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 5500°C.

A nitrogen flow of about 150 cc/min was passed into the bubbler, and the nitrogen gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported by nitrogen carrier gas into the reaction tube at a flow rate of about 500 cc/min.

The stream of oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen gas was passed into the reaction tube through the second carrier line. The flow rate of oxygen was about 495 cc/min and that of the nitrogen diluent was about 50 cc/min. A concentration ratio of 2 to trimethyl aluminum of about 200 to 1 was maintained during reaction to obtain a white body color.

The process was continued for 8 hours and an aluminum oxide coating having a thickness of about 2 Angstroms was formed on the phosphor particles.

Electron microscopy of the coated phosphor particles of this example indicated a smooth conformal coating of aluminum oxide on the cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor particles. The continuous and conformal nature of the coating applied to the phosphor particle in the example was demonstrated by the replication of the submicron features of the phosphor substrate. The submicron features of the coated particle, however, are visibly less pronounced when compared to the submicron features of an uncoated particle.

The coated phosphor particles were applied to the inner surface of the lamp envelope according to known techniques, including the steps of slurring the coated phosphor in an aqueous suspension containing by weight Aluminum Oxide C and normal wet sieving,

USE EXAMPLE XIV

In this example, particles of cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor powder were individually coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating, using the apparatus described in Example I. Three hundred grams of calcium halophosphate phosphor powder (Cool White No. 4459, Lot 769) and 0.15 g (0.05 weight percent) Aluminum Oxide C, available from Degussa, Inc., the fluidizing aid, were dry blended in a polyethylene jar to obtain a uniform dispersion of the Aluminum Oxide C fluidizing aid throughout the alkaline earth halophosphate powder. The mixture of the halophosphate phosphor powder and fluidizing aid was added to the quartz glass reaction tube to form the phosphor bed. Liquid trimethyl aluminum was used in the stainless steel bubbler as the coating precursor material.

The carrier gas was bubbled into the trimethyl aluminum liquid to form carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum. The carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported via the carrier line to the quartz glass reaction tube. Oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen was transported into the fluidized bed through the holes located on the shaft of the vibrating mixer.

The vibrating mixer was operated at a speed at 60 cycles/minute.

The bubbler and the nitrogen gas line leading into the bubbler were both heated to and maintained at a

temperature of 300°C. The line leading out of the bubbler and into the bottom of the quartz glass reaction tube was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 450°C.

The frit area of the reaction tube was maintained at a temperature of from about 60°C to about 1500°C; the oxidizing gas inlet area, located above the vibrating disc, was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 4000°C; and the area above the oxidizing gas inlet area was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 5500°C.

A nitrogen flow of about 150 cc/min was passed into the bubbler, and the nitrogen gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported by nitrogen carrier gas into the reaction tube at a flow rate of about 50 cc/min.

The stream of oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen gas was passed into the reaction tube through the second carrier line. The flow rate of oxygen was about 495 cc and that of the nitrogen diluent was about 50 cc/min. A concentration ratio of 2 to trimethyl aluminum about 200 to 1 was maintained during this reaction to obtain a white body color.

The process was continued for 12 hours and an aluminum oxide coating having a thickness of about Angstroms was formed on the phosphor particles.

Electron microscopy of the coated phosphor particles of this example indicated a smooth conformal coating of aluminum oxide on the cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor particles. The continuous and conformal nature of the coating applied to the phosphor particle in the example was demonstrated by the replication of the submicron features of the phosphor substrate. The submicron features of the coated particle, however, are visibly less pronounced when compared to the submicron features of an uncoated particle.

The coated phosphor particles were applied to the inner surface of the lamp envelope according to known techniques including the steps of slurrying the coated phosphor in an aqueous suspension containing by weight Aluminum Oxide C and normal wet sieving.

USE EXAMPLE XV

In this example, particles of cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor powder were individually coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating, using the apparatus described in Example I. Three hundred grams of calcium halophosphate phosphor powder (Cool White No.

4459, Lot 769) and 0.15g (0.05 weight percent) Aluminum Oxide C, available from Degussa, Inc., the fluidizing aid, were dry blended in a polyethylene jar to form a uniform dispersion of the Aluminum Oxide C fluidizing aid throughout the alkaline earth halophosphate powder. The mixture of the halophosphate phosphor powder and fluidizing aid was added to the quartz glass reaction tube to form the phosphor bed. Liquid trimethyl aluminum was used in the stainless steel bubbler as the coating precursor material.

The carrier gas was bubbled into the trimethyl aluminum liquid to form carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum. The carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported via the carrier line to the quartz glass reaction tube. Oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen was transported into the fluidized bed through the holes located on the shaft of the vibrating mixer.

The vibrating mixer was operated at a speed of 60 cycles per minute.

The bubbler and the nitrogen gas line leading into the bubbler were both heated to and maintained at temperature of 300°C. The line leading out of the bubbler and into the bottom of the quartz glass reaction tube was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 450°C.

The frit area of the reaction tube was maintained at a temperature of from about 600°C to about 1500°C. The oxidizing gas inlet area, located above the vibrating disc, was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 400°C; and the area above the oxidizing gas inlet area was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 550°C.

A nitrogen flow of about 200 cc/min was passed into the bubbler, and the nitrogen gas containing vapor of trimethylaluminum was transported by nitrogen carrier gas into the reaction tube at a flow rate of about 450 cc/min.

The stream of oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen gas was passed into the reaction tube through the secondary carrier line. The flow rate of oxygen was about 496 cc/min and that of the nitrogen diluent was about 50 cc/min. A concentration ratio of O₂ to trimethyl aluminum of about 200 to 1 was maintained during this reaction to obtain a white body color.

The process was continued for 12 hours and an aluminum oxide coating having a thickness of about 100 Angstroms was formed on the phosphor particles.

Electron microscopy of the coated phosphor particles of this example indicated a smooth conformal coating of aluminum oxide on the cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor particles. The continuous and conformal nature of the coating applied to the phosphor particle in the example was demonstrated by the replication of the submicron features of the phosphor substrate. The submicron features of the coated particle, however, are visibly less pronounced when compared to the submicron features of an uncoated particle.

The coated phosphor particles were applied to the inner surface of the lamp envelope according to known techniques, including the steps of slurring the coated phosphor in aqueous suspension containing 1% by weight

Aluminum Oxide C and normal wet sieving.

The phosphor luminance and maintenance data for the standard 4 Foot T-12 VHO cool white fluorescent lamps of

Examples VIII-XV appear in Table III. While the data show some variation in maintenance improvement within the thickness series, all coating thicknesses studied result in improved fluorescent maintenance.

TABLE III

Al₂O₃ PHOSPHOR LUMINANCE

COATING FLOW RATE (MAINTENANCE

USE THICKNESS INTO BUBBLER 0 100 500 1,000 2,000

EX. SOLVENT METHOD (ANGSTROMS) (CC/MIN) HOURS HOURS HOURS HOURS HOUR

VIII Water Wet Sieve 0 -- 7805 6894 6266 5860 5254 -- (88.3) (80.3) (75.1) (67.3)

IX Water Wet Sieve 100 100 7787 6858 6376 6118 5669 -- (88.1) (81.9) (78.6) (72.8)

X Water Wet Sieve 100 150 7672 6765 6239 5980 5388 -- (88.2) (81.3) (77.9) (70.2)

XI Water Wet Sieve 150 100 7745 6969 6508 6282 5786 -- (90.0) (84.0) (81.1) (74.7)

XII Water Wet Sieve 150 150 7707 6811 6308 6068 5616 -- (88.4) (81.8) (78.7) (72.9)

XIII Water Wet Sieve 200 150 7620 6725 6248 5914 5385 -- (88.2) (81.9) (77.6) (70.6)

XIV Water Wet Sieve 300 150 7552 6765 6244 5998 5531 -- (89.6) (82.7) (79.4) (73.2)

XV Water Wet Sieve 400 200 7416 6632 6123 5872 5407 -- (89.4) (82.6) (79.2) (72.9)

The effect of the manner in which the phosphor coating is prepared prior to being applied to the inner surface of the lamp envelope was evaluated in the standard 4 Foot - T12 VHO lamp. The results are forth in Table IV.

USE EXAMPLE XVI

Uncoated particles of calcium halophosphate (Cool White No. 4459, Lot 501) were applied to the lamp envelope in an aqueous suspension containing 1. by weight Aluminum Oxide C and processed into a finished lamp by known techniques. The phosphor was ger milled during the fabrication procedure.

USE EXAMPLE XVII

Particles of calcium halophosphate (Cool White No.

4459, Lot 501) were coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating, having a calculated thicknes 150

Angstroms, as described in Example I. The coated phosphor particles were applied to the lamp envel an aqueous suspension containing 1.758 by weight Aluminum Oxide C and processed into a finished by known techniques. There was no milling of the phosphor during the fabrication procedure.

USE EXAMPLE XVIII

A lamp was prepared in accordance with Use Example XVII with the inclusion of the additional step of gentle milling.

USEEXAMPLE XIX

Particles of calcium halophosphate (Cool White No.

4459, Lot 501) were coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating having a calculated thickness 150

Angstroms, as described in Example I. The coated phosphor particles were applied to the inner surfa the lamp envelope according to known techniques, including the steps of slurring the coated phosph an aqueous suspension containing 1.758 by weight Aluminum Oxide C and normal wet sieving.

USE EXAMPLE XX

Particles of calcium halophosphate (Cool White No.

4459, Lot 501) were coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating having a calculated thickness 150

Angstroms, as described in Example I. The coated phosphor particles were applied to the inner surfa the lamp envelope according to known techniques, including the steps of slurring the coated phosphl an organic solvent containing 1% by weight Aluminum Oxide C and normal wet sieving.

The phosphor luminance and maintenance data for the standard 4 Foot T-12 VHO cool white fluores lamps of

Use Examples XVI - XX appear in Table IV. Although maintenance improvements are seen for all t fabrication methods tested, the greater maintenance improvement for lamps using individually and continuously coated phosphor particles is seen in lamps fabricated using wet-sieving.

The data in Table IV and Table I support the theory that milling is detrimental to optimum lamp performance for lamps using individually and continuously A1203-coated phosphor particles.

TABLE IV**PHOSPHOR LUMINANCE (MAINTENANCE)**

USE 0 171 500 1,000 1,470 2,000 3,000 4,000

EX. PHOSPHOR METHOD HOUR HOURS HOURS HOURS HOURS HOURS HOURS HOURS

XVI Uncoated Aqueous 7603 6900 6699 6177 5443 5440 5039 4760

Lot 501 Suspension -- (90.8) (88.1) (81.2) (71.6) (71.6) (66.3) (62.6)

Milled

XVII Al₂O₃-Coated Aqueous 7410 6886 6588 6228 5860 5885 5620 5490

Lot 501 Suspension -- (92.9) (88.9) (84.0) (79.1) (79.4) (75.8) (74.1)

Stirred-in

XVIII Al₂O₃-Coated Aqueous 7451 6735 6436 6126 5727 5673 5437 5252

Lot 501 Suspension -- (90.4) (86.4) (82.2) (76.9) (76.1) (73.0) (70.5)

Milled

XIX Al₂O₃-Coated Aqueous 7347 6992 6753 6408 6235 6060 5833 5737

Lot 501 Suspension -- (95.2) (91.9) (87.2) (84.9) (82.5) (79.4) (78.1)

Wet Sieved

XX Al₂O₃-Coated Organic 7645 6976 6515 6257 5974 5892 5677 5417

Lot 501 Suspension -- (91.2) (85.2) (81.8) (78.1) (77.1) (74.3) (70.9)

Wet Sieved

The effect of aluminum oxide coated phosphor particles on fluorescent lamp phosphor maintenance further evaluated in the standard 6 Foot T12 HO (High Output) lamp:

USE EXAMPLE E XXI

Uncoated particles of calcium halophosphate (Cool

White No. <RTI 4459, Lot 501) were applied to a lamp envelope in an aqueous suspension and processed into a finished lamp by known techniques.

USE EXAMPLE XXII

Particles of calcium halophosphate (Cool White No.

4459, Lot 501) were coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating, as described in Example I. The coated phosphor particles were applied to a lamp envelope in an aqueous suspension and processed into a finished lamp by known techniques. There was no milling of the phosphor during the fabrication procedure.

The phosphor luminance and maintenance data of the 6 Foot - T12HO cool white fluorescent lamps of Use Examples XXI and XXII appear in Table V.

TABLE V

PHOSPHOR LUMINANCE (MAINTENANCE

USE 0 100 500 1,000 2,000 3,000

EXAMPLE SUSPENSION PHOSPHOR METHOD HOURS HOURS HOURS HOURS HOURS H

VIII Water Uncoated "Milled" 7174 6829 6592 6410 5820 5676

Lot 501 -- (95.6) (91.9) (89.4) (81.1) (79.1)

IX Water Al₂O₃-Coated Stirred-in 6913 6769 6633 6520 6146 6209

Lot 501 -- (97.9) (95.9) (94.3) (88.9) (89.8)

USE EXAMPLE XXIII

In this example, particles of the green-emitting manganese doped zinc orthosilicate phosphor were individually coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating, using the apparatus described in Example I. The manganese doped zinc orthosilicate, or willemite, phosphor powder was sieved through a 400 mesh screen before being used in the present method to remove large agglomerates of particles. Three hundred grams of the sieved manganese doped zinc orthosilicate phosphor powder (Sylvania Type 2285) and (0.05 weight percent) Aluminum Oxide C, available from Degussa, Inc., the fluidizing aid, were dry blended in a polyethylene jar to obtain a uniform dispersion of the Aluminum Oxide C fluidizing aid throughout the phosphor powder. The mixture of the phosphor powder and fluidizing aid was added to a quartz glass reaction tube to form the phosphor bed. Liquid trimethyl aluminum was used in the stainless steel bubbler as the coating precursor material. The carrier gas was bubbled into the trimethyl aluminum liquid to form carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum. The carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum was transported via the carrier line to the quartz glass reaction tube. Oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen was transported into the fluidized bed through the holes located on the shaft of vibrating mixer. The vibrating mixer was operated at a speed at 60 cycles/minute.

The bubbler and the nitrogen gas line leading into the bubbler were both heated to and maintained at temperature of 300C. The line leading out of the bubbler and into the bottom of the quartz glass reaction tube was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 450C.

The frit area of the reaction tube was maintained at a temperature of from about 60 C to about 150 C. The oxidizing gas inlet area, located above the vibrating disc, was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 400 C; and the area above the oxidizing gas inlet area was heated to and maintained at a temperature of about 550 C.

A nitrogen flow of about 150 cc/min was passed into the bubbler, and the nitrogen gas containing vapor of trimethyl aluminum was transported into the reaction tube by nitrogen carrier gas at a flow rate of about 500 cc/min.

The stream of oxygen gas diluted with nitrogen gas was passed into the reaction tube through the second carrier line. The flow rate of the oxygen was about 500 cc/min and that of the nitrogen diluent was about 50 cc/min. A concentration ratio of O₂ to trimethyl aluminum of about 200 to 1 was maintained during this reaction to obtain a white body color.

The process was continued for 12 hours and an aluminum oxide coating having a thickness of about 100 Angstroms was formed on the phosphor particles.

The aluminum oxide coated particles of the willemite were removed from the reaction tube.

Electron microscopy of the coated phosphor particles of this example indicated a smooth conformal coating of aluminum oxide on the willemite phosphor particles. The continuous and conformal nature of the coating applied to the phosphor particle in the example is demonstrated by the replication of the submicron features of the phosphor substrate. The submicron features of the coated particle, however, were visibly less pronounced when compared to the submicron features of an uncoated particle.

Auger analysis of the coated particle surface revealed that complete surface coverage by aluminum oxide had been achieved, based upon the complete attenuation of the zinc, manganese, and silicon in the coated willemite compared to the uncoated willemite phosphor standard.

The individually and continuously coated phosphor particles were then applied to the inner surface of a fluorescent lamp envelope, and processed into a finished 4

Foot - T12(40 Watt) fluorescent lamp according to known techniques, including the steps of slurrying phosphor in an organic solvent containing 0.6% by weight Aluminum Oxide C, and normal wet sieving. There was no milling of the phosphor during the fabrication process. NoSub 203 was added to the slurry.

USE EXAMPLE XXIV

Uncoated particles of manganese-doped zinc orthosilicate (Sylvania Type 2285) were applied to the surface of a fluorescent lamp envelope and processed into a finished 4 Foot - T12(40 Watt) fluorescent lamp according to known techniques, including the steps of slurrying the phosphor in an organic solvent containing 0.6% by weight

Aluminum Oxide C, and normal wet sieving. There was no milling of the phosphor during the fabrication process. NoSub 203 was added to the slurry.

USE EXAMPLE XXV

Uncoated particles of manganese-doped zinc orthosilicate (Sylvania Type 2285) were applied to the surface of a fluorescent lamp envelope and processed into a finished 4 Foot - T12 (40 Watt) fluorescent lamp according to known techniques, including the steps of slurrying the phosphor in an organic solvent containing 0.6% by weight

Aluminum Oxide C and gentle milling of the phosphor during the fabrication. Antimony (III) oxide (Sb₂O₃) was added to the coating suspension. An addition of Sb₂O₃ to the coating suspension used

lamp manufacture is known to improve maintenance. Keith H. Butler, FLUORESCENT LAMPPHOSPHORS - TECHNOLOGY AND THEORY, The Pennsylvania State University Press (University Park, Pa 1980), page 8. The addition of Sub 203 is standard in the industry unless otherwise specifies.

The phosphor luminance and maintenance data for the 4 Foot - T12 (40 Watt) manganese-doped zinc orthosilicate fluorescent lamps of Use Examples XXIII through XXV appear in Table VI. An exceptional improvement in lumen maintenance is seen for lamps using individually and continuously Al₂O₃ - coated particles of manganese-doped zinc orthosilicate phosphor.

The coating thickness reported in each of the preceding Use Examples was calculated using the following equation: grams Al₂O₃/hour coating/hour =

$3.97 \text{ g Al}_2\text{O}_3/\text{cc} \times \text{surface} \times \text{total}$

area of bed

phosphor loading TABLE VI

PHOSPHOR LUMINANCE (MAINTENANCE

USE COATING 0 100 500 1,000

EXAMPLE SUSPENSION PHOSPHOR HOURS HOURS HOURS HOURS

XXIII Organic Al₂O₃-Coated 4696 4618 4558 4496

Wet Sieved ZnSiO₄:Mn -- (98.3) (97.0) (95.7)

No Sb₂O₃

XXIV Organic Uncoated 4745 4296 3634 3181

Wet sieved ZnSiO₄:Mn -- (90.5) (76.6) (67.0)

No Sb₂O₃

XXV Organic Uncoated 4393 4093 3821 3465

Wet Sieved ZnSiO₄: :Mn -- (93.2) (87.0) (78.9)

Sb₃O₃ Added</RTI>

While there has been shown and described what at present is considered a preferred embodiment of the invention, it will be obvious to those skilled in the art that various changes and modifications may be made therein without departing from the scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

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Claims of corresponding document: **EP0160856**

CLAIMS:

1. A method for forming a protective coating on phosphor particles comprising:

(a) fluidizing particles of a phosphor powder in a fluidized bed;

(b) exposing the fluidized particles to a vaporized coating precursor at a first temperature to envelop the particles with coating precursor material, said first temperature being less than the temperature at which the coating precursor material decomposes; and

(c) reacting the coating precursor material enveloping the fluidized particles at a second temperature to form a continuous protective coating of predetermined thickness on the surface of individual phosphor particles, said second temperature being greater than or equal to the

temperature at which the coating precursor material reacts to form the protective coating.

2. A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the phosphor powder is a fine phosphor powder, said method further comprising:
agitating particles in the fluidized bed with agitating means while said particles are fluidized.

3. A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the phosphor powder comprises a uniform mixture of fine phosphor powder and up to about 1 weight percent fluidizing aid.

4. A method in accordance with claim 2 wherein the protective coating is a refractory oxide.

5. A method in accordance with claim 3 wherein the protective coating is a refractory oxide.

6. A method for forming a protective coating on phosphor particles comprising:

(a) vaporizing a volatilizable coating precursor material into an inert carrier gas to form a carrier gas containing vaporized coating precursor material;

(b) passing said carrier gas containing the vaporized coating precursor material through particulate phosphor powder to form a fluidized bed and to envelop particles of the phosphor powder with vapor of the coating precursor material contained in the carrier gas, -said fluidized bed being maintained in a temperature gradient ranging from a lowest temperature to a highest temperature, said lowest temperature being less than the temperature at which said coating precursor material decomposes and said highest temperature being equal to or greater than the temperature at which the coating precursor material reacts with an oxidizing gas to form a desired coating material;

(c) passing oxidizing gas into said fluidized bed separately from said carrier gas containing the vaporized coating precursor material and reacting said oxidizing gas with vapor of the coating precursor material on the particles of phosphor powder to form a continuous coating of predetermined thickness on the phosphor particles.

7. A method in accordance with claim 6 wherein said inert carrier gas is selected from the group consisting of nitrogen, argon, helium, neon, and mixtures thereof.

8. A method in accordance with claim 6 wherein said oxidizing gas is diluted with an inert gas.

9. A method in accordance with claim 6 wherein said protective coating material is a refractory oxide.

10. A method for forming a protective coating on phosphor particles comprising:

(a) vaporizing a volatilizable oxygen-containing coating precursor material into an inert carrier gas to form a carrier gas

containing vaporized oxygen-containing coating precursor material;;

(b) passing said carrier gas containing the vaporized oxygen-containing coating precursor material through particulate phosphor powder to form a fluidized bed and to envelop particles of the phosphor powder with vapor of the oxygen-containing coating precursor material contained in the carrier gas, said fluidized bed being maintained in a temperature gradient ranging from a lowest temperature to a highest temperature, said lowest temperature being less than the temperature at which said oxygen containing coating precursor material decomposes and said highest temperature being equal to or greater than the temperature at which the oxygen-containing, coating precursor material reacts to form a continuous coating of predetermined thickness on the phosphor particles.

11. A method in accordance with claim 10 wherein the protective coating material is a refractory oxide

12. A method for forming a continuous coating on phosphor particles of a fine phosphor powder comprising:

(a) vaporizing a volatilizable coating precursor material into an inert carrier gas to form a carrier gas containing vaporized coating precursor material;

(b) passing said carrier gas containing the vaporized coating precursor material through a mixture of a fine phosphor powder and up to about 1 weight percent of a fluidizing aid to form a fluidized bed in which the particles are suspended in the carrier gas and to envelop the fluidized particles with vapor of the coating precursor material contained in the carrier gas, said fluidized bed being maintained in a temperature gradient ranging from a lowest temperature to a highest temperature, said lowest temperature being less than the temperature at which said coating precursor material decomposes and said highest temperature being equal to or greater than the temperature at which the coating precursor material reacts with an oxidizing gas to form a desired coating material;

(c) passing oxidizing gas into said fluidized bed separately from said carrier gas containing the vaporized coating precursor material and reacting said oxidizing gas with the vapor of the coating precursor material on the particles of phosphor powder to form a continuous coating of predetermined thickness on the phosphor particle.

13. A method in accordance with claim 12 further comprising the step of agitating particles in the fluidized bed while said particles are suspended in the fluidized bed by the carrier gas.
14. A method in accordance with claim 13 wherein said fluidizing aid is selected from the group consisting of small particle alumina and small particle silica.
15. A method in accordance with claim 13 wherein said inert carrier gas is selected from the group consisting of nitrogen, argon, helium, neon, and mixtures thereof.
16. A method in accordance with claim 13 wherein said oxidizing gas is diluted with an inert gas.
17. A method in accordance with claim 13 wherein said coating precursor material is a volatilizable organometallic compound.
18. A method in accordance with claim 13 wherein said coating precursor material is a volatilizable metalacetylacetonate.
19. A method in accordance with claim 13 wherein said coating precursor material is a volatilizable alkoxide compound.
20. A method for forming a protective coating on particles of a fine phosphor powder comprising:
- (a) vaporizing a volatilizable coating precursor material into an inert carrier gas to form a carrier gas containing vaporized coating precursor material;
 - (b) passing said carrier gas containing the vaporized coating precursor material through a fine particulate phosphor powder to form a fluidized bed and to envelop particles of the fine phosphor powder with vapor of the coating precursor material contained in the carrier gas, said fluidized bed being maintained in a temperature gradient ranging from a lowest temperature to a highest temperature, said lowest temperature being less than the temperature at which said coating precursor material decomposes and said highest temperature being equal to or greater than the temperature at which the coating precursor material reacts with an oxidizing gas to form a desired coating material;
 - (c) agitating particles with agitating means in the fluidized bed while said particles are suspended in the fluidized bed by the carrier gas; and
 - (d) passing oxidizing gas into said fluidized bed separately from said carrier gas containing the vaporized coating precursor material and reacting said oxidizing gas with vapor of the coating precursor material on the particles of the fine phosphor powder to form a continuous coating of predetermined thickness on the phosphor particles.

21. A method in accordance with claim 20 wherein the protective coating is a refractory oxide.

22. A method for forming a protective coating on particles of a fine phosphor powder comprising:

(a) vaporizing a volatilizable oxygen-containing coating precursor material into an inert carrier gas to form a carrier gas containing vaporized oxygen-containing coating precursor material;;
(b) passing said carrier gas containing the vaporized oxygen-containing coating precursor material through a mixture of a fine particulate phosphor powder and up to about 1 weight percent of a fluidizing aid to form a fluidized bed and to envelop particles of the fine phosphor powder with vapor of the oxygen-containing coating precursor material contained in the carrier gas, said fluidized bed being maintained in a temperature gradient ranging from a lowest temperature to a highest temperature, said lowest temperature being less than the temperature at which said oxygen-containing coating precursor material decomposes and said highest temperature being equal to or greater than the temperature at which the oxygen-containing coating precursor material reacts to form a continuous coating of predetermined thickness on the phosphor particles.

23. A method in accordance with claim 22 further comprising the step of agitating particles in the fluidized bed with agitating means while said particles are suspended in the fluidized bed by the carrier gas.

24. A method in accordance with claim 22 wherein the protective coating is a refractory oxide.

25. A method for forming a protective coating on particles of a fine phosphor powder comprising:

(a) vaporizing a volatilizable oxygen-containing coating precursor material into an inert carrier gas to form a carrier gas containing vaporized oxygen-containing coating precursor material;
(b) passing said carrier gas containing the vaporized oxygen-containing coating precursor material through a fine particulate phosphor powder to form a fluidized bed and to envelop particles of the fine phosphor powder with vapor of the oxygen-containing coating precursor material contained in the carrier gas, said fluidized bed being maintained in a temperature gradient ranging from a lowest temperature to a highest temperature, said lowest temperature being less than the temperature at which said oxygen-containing coating precursor material decomposes and said highest temperature being equal to or greater than the temperature at which the oxygen-containing coating precursor material reacts to form a continuous coating of predetermined thickness on the phosphor

particles; and

(c) agitating particles with agitating means in the fluidized bed while said particles are suspended in the fluidized bed by the carrier gas.

26. A method in accordance with claim 25 wherein the protective coating is a refractory oxide.

27. A method for forming a continuous aluminum oxide coating upon particles of a cool white alkali earth halophosphate phosphor comprising:

(a) vaporizing trimethyl aluminum into an inert carrier gas consisting of nitrogen to form a carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum;

(b) passing said carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum through a mixture of cool white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor powder and up to about 1 weight percent small particle alumina to form a fluidized bed in which the particles are suspended in the carrier gas and to envelop particles of the phosphor powder with vapor of the trimethyl aluminum contained in the carrier gas, said fluidized bed being maintained in a temperature gradient ranging from a lowest temperature to a highest temperature, said lowest temperature being from about 600°C to about 1500°C and said highest temperature being from about 4500°C to about 650°C;

(c) agitating particles of the phosphor while said particles are suspended in the fluidized bed by the carrier gas;

(d) passing oxidizing gas consisting essentially of oxygen into said fluidized bed separately from said carrier gas containing vaporized trimethyl aluminum and reacting said oxygen with the trimethyl aluminum vapor on the calcium halophosphate particles to form a continuous aluminum oxide coating of predetermined thickness on the phosphor particles.

28. A method in accordance with claim 27 wherein steps (a) through (d) are continued for a period of sufficient to form a continuous aluminum oxide coating having a thickness greater than or equal to a 100

Angstroms on the phosphor particles.

29. A phosphor particle having a continuous protective coating surrounding the outer surface of the particle.

30. A particle of a finely-divided fluorescent lamp phosphor having a continuous coating of aluminum oxide surrounding the particle.

31. A particle in accordance with claim 30 wherein the phosphor is alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor

32. A particle in accordance with claim 30 wherein the phosphor is manganese-doped zinc orthosilicate phosphor.

33. A method for improving lumen maintenance of fluorescent lamps comprising the steps of
(a) depositing a continuous aluminum oxide coating on individual particles of a finely-divided fluorescent lamp phosphor to form individually and continuously coated phosphor particles;
(b) applying one or more layers of phosphor to a fluorescent lamp envelope to form a phosphor coated envelope, at least one of the phosphor layers having a phosphor component comprising said individually and continuously coated phosphor particle; and
(c) processing said phosphor coated envelope into a finished lamp.

34. A method in accordance with claim 33 wherein said finely-divided fluorescent lamp phosphor is alkaline earth halophosphate.

35. A method in accordance with claim 33 wherein said finely-divided fluorescent lamp phosphor is manganese-doped zinc orthosilicate.

36. A method in accordance with claim 33 wherein the continuous aluminum oxide coating is deposited on the individual particles of a finely-divided fluorescent lamp phosphor by chemical vapor deposition while the particles are suspended in a fluidized bed.

37. A method in accordance with claim 33 wherein the continuous aluminum oxide coating is deposited on the individual particles of a finely-divided fluorescent lamp phosphor powder by chemical vapor deposition while the particles are suspended in a fluidized bed, the fluidized particles being exposed to vaporized aluminum-containing precursor material at a first temperature, the first temperature being greater than the temperature at which the precursor material decomposes, and the precursor material being reacted to form a continuous aluminum oxide coating on the surface of the individual particles at a second temperature, the second temperature being greater than or equal to the temperature at which the precursor material reacts to form aluminum oxide.

38. A method for improving lumen maintenance of fluorescent lamps comprising the steps of
(a) coating individual particles of a finely-divided fluorescent lamp phosphor powder by fluidizing the powder and applying a continuous aluminum oxide coating to the individual particles by chemical vapor deposition while the particles are suspended in a fluidized bed to form individually and continuously coated phosphor particles, each particle being surrounded by a continuous aluminum oxide coating;
(b) applying one or more layers of phosphor to a fluorescent lamp envelope to form a phosphor coated envelope, at least one of the phosphor layers having a phosphor component comprising said individually and continuously coated phosphor particle; and
(c) processing said phosphor coated envelope into a finished lamp.

39. A method for improving lumen maintenance of fluorescent lamps comprising the steps of
(a) coating individual particles of a finely-divided cool-white alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor

powder by fluidizing the powder and applying a continuous aluminum oxide coating to the individual particles by chemical vapor deposition while the particles are suspended in a fluidized bed to form individually and continuously coated phosphor particles, each particle being surrounded by a continuous aluminum oxide coating;

(b) applying one or more layers of phosphor to a fluorescent lamp envelope to form a phosphor coated envelope, at least one of the phosphor layers having a phosphor component comprising said individually and continuously coated phosphor particle; and

(c) processing said phosphor coated envelope into a finished lamp.

40. A method for improving lumen maintenance of fluorescent lamps comprising the steps of

(a) coating individual particles of a finely-divided manganese-doped zinc orthosilicate phosphor powder by fluidizing the powder and applying a continuous aluminum oxide coating to the individual particles by chemical vapor deposition while the particles are suspended in a fluidized bed to form individually and continuously coated phosphor particles, each particle being surrounded by a continuous aluminum oxide coating;

(b) applying one or more layers of phosphor to a fluorescent lamp envelope to form a phosphor coated envelope, at least one of the phosphor layers having a phosphor component comprising said individually and continuously coated phosphor particle; and

(c) processing said phosphor coated envelope into a finished lamp.

41. A fluorescent lamp comprising a glass envelope having an inner wall wherein the inner wall of the glass envelope is coated with one or more layers of phosphor, at least one of the phosphor layers having a phosphor component comprising individual particles of a finely-divided fluorescent lamp phosphor which have been individually coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating.

42. A fluorescent lamp in accordance with claim 41 wherein the finely-divided fluorescent lamp phosphor is alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor.

43. A fluorescent lamp in accordance with claim 41 wherein the finely-divided fluorescent lamp phosphor is manganese-doped zinc orthosilicate phosphor.

44. A fluorescent lamp comprising a glass envelope having an inner wall wherein the inner wall of the glass envelope is coated with one or more layers of phosphor, at least one of the phosphor layers having a phosphor component comprising particles of a finely-divided fluorescent lamp phosphor which have been individually coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating by chemical vapor deposition in a fluidized bed.

45. A fluorescent lamp comprising a glass envelope having an inner wall wherein the inner wall of the

glass envelope is coated with one or more layers of phosphor, at least one of the phosphor layers having a phosphor component comprising particles of alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor which have been individually coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating by chemical vapor deposition in a fluidized bed.

46. A fluorescent lamp comprising a glass envelope having an inner wall wherein the inner wall of the glass envelope is coated with one or more layers of phosphor, at least one of the phosphor layers having a phosphor component comprising particles of a manganese-doped zinc orthosilicate phosphor powder which have been individually coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating by chemical vapor deposition in a fluidized bed.

47. A fluorescent lamp comprising a glass envelope having an inner wall wherein the inner wall of the glass envelope is coated with a phosphor comprising particles of a finely-divided fluorescent lamp phosphor powder which have been individually coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating.

48. A fluorescent lamp in accordance with claim 47 wherein the finely-divided fluorescent lamp phosphor is alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor.

49. A fluorescent lamp in accordance with claim 47 wherein the finely-divided fluorescent lamp phosphor is manganese-doped zinc orthosilicate phosphor.

50. A fluorescent lamp comprising a glass envelope having an inner wall wherein the inner wall of the glass envelope is coated with a phosphor comprising particles of alkaline earth halophosphate phosphor which have been individually coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating by chemical vapor deposition in a fluidized bed.

51. A fluorescent lamp comprising a glass envelope having an inner wall wherein the inner wall of the glass envelope is coated with a phosphor comprising particles of a manganese-doped zinc orthosilicate phosphor which have been individually coated with a continuous aluminum oxide coating by chemical vapor deposition in a fluidized bed.

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